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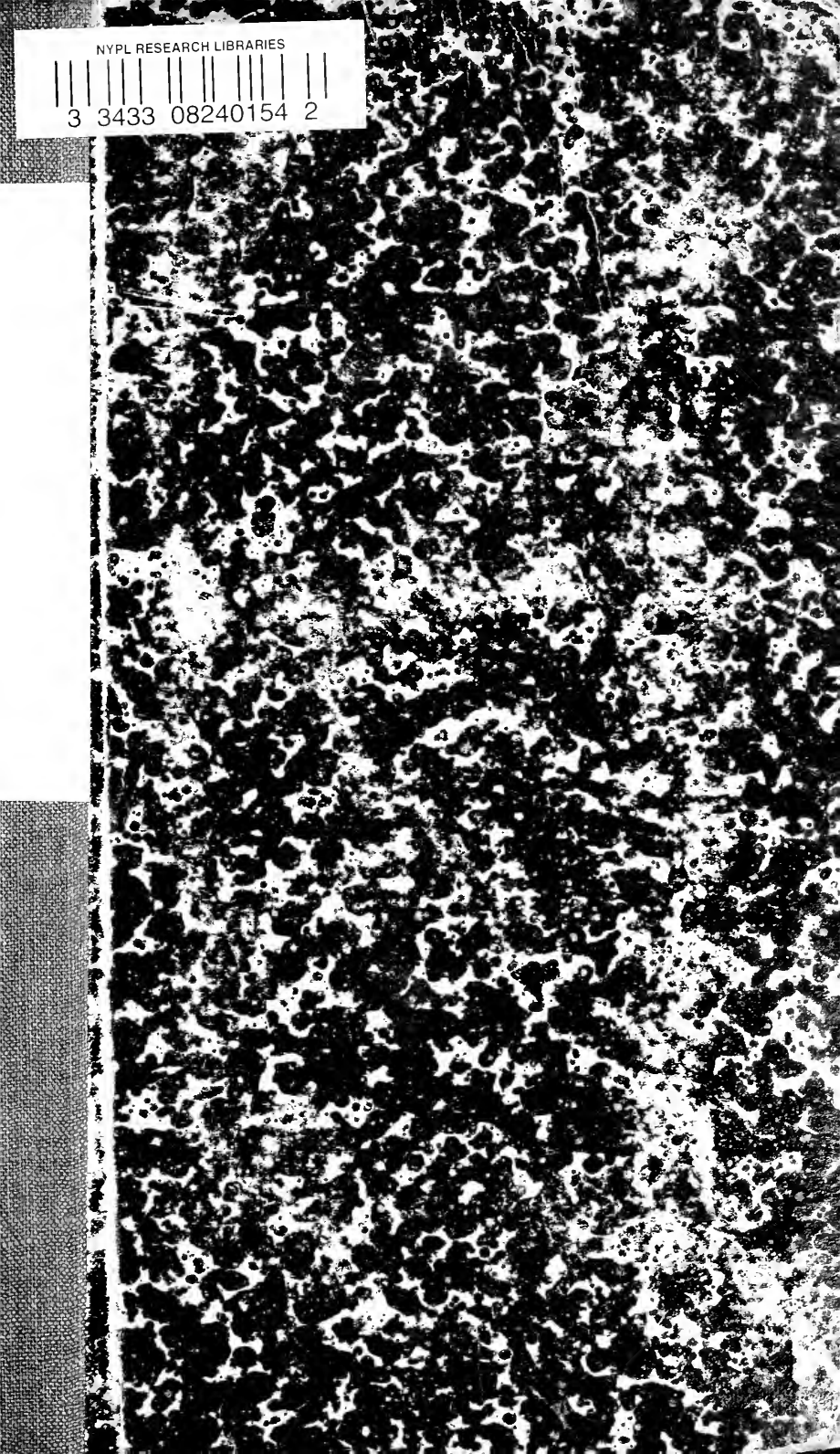

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SERMON

DELIVERED AT

THE INSTALLATION

OF

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AS PASTOR

OF THE THIRD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN

Plymouth, Mass.

NOV. 3, 1824.

BY JUSTIN EDWARDS,
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ANDOVER
PRINTED BY FLAGG AND GOULD.
1825.

SERMON.

1 Tim. iii. 15.

THAT THOU MAYEST KNOW HOW THOU OUGHTEST TO BEHAVE THYSELF IN THE HOUSE OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH.

This was written by Paul to Timothy. Timothy was a minister of the gospel, and, at that time, at Ephesus. The church in that city was gathered by the instrumentality of Paul; and, like all churches gathered by him, was "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." For a time it prospered. But afterwards false teachers arose, and by preaching erroneous sentiments, endangered its welfare. Paul, being called to go into Macedonia, besought Timothy to abide at Ephesus; in order to charge those persons not to preach any doctrines, except those which he had preached. But as Timothy was a young man, and the situation in which he was placed difficult, Paul, after his departure, wrote to him this epistle. His object was to show him how he ought to behave in the church. The behaviour referred to comprehended his preaching, and practice; his whole duty as a minister. The right understanding, and faithful discharge of this, was

highly important, not only to his salvation, the prosperity of that church, and the salvation of its members, but to the prosperity of all other churches, and the salvation of future generations. Because the church was "the pillar and ground of the truth."

A pillar supports that which is laid upon it. The ground is that on which it rests. These are figurative expressions, and, applied to the church, mean, that it is the instrument of supporting, and perpetuating the truth of God in the world. This is true not only of the church at Ephesus, but of the church of Christ wherever found. It was redeemed by the blood of Immanuel, and organized as a visible body on earth, for the purpose of maintaining his truth; extending it to all nations, and perpetuating it to all ages. And, if faithful to God, it will accomplish this object.

Hence arise four questions, viz.

I. What is the church?

II. What is the truth which the church supports?

III. How does the church support it?

IV. For what reasons?

In a plain, scriptural manner to answer these questions, and make a practical application, will be my object in this discourse. And may the Holy Spirit enlighten our minds, lead us into his truth, sanctify us by it, and make us wise, even to salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ.

I. What is the church?

The word *church* is sometimes used in the New Testament for all persons who have been, or shall

be, born of God; and who will stand at the last day on the right hand of Christ. Thus it is used in the fifth chapter to the Ephesians;—"As Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

But the word *church* is more often used, for only a part of these persons; who are at the same time on earth, and so near, as to unite with such as profess to be like them, in supporting the worship, observing the ordinances, and obeying the commands of God. Thus we read of "the church of God, which is at Corinth;" "the churches of Asia;" "the church of the Thessalonians, in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

But what was the character of these persons, such of them as were in reality what they professed to be? *They were born of God.* They all professed to receive Jesus Christ. And "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God." To be *born of God*, is a phrase used in the Bible, for that change without which a man cannot see the kingdom of heaven.

That the members of the church, in the days of Paul, if they were what they professed to be, had experienced this change, is evident from the manner in which the Holy Ghost speaks of them. 'The Lord added to the church such as should be *saved*.'

Paul said to members of the church, 'according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' 'The preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that perish, but unto us that are saved, it is the power of God.' 'Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace.' Speaking of openly immoral persons, he says to members of the church, 'Such were some of you; but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.' 'You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.' 'God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.' 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.'

Such were members of the church in the days of Paul. They were the 'household of faith.' They were 'built upon the foundation Jesus Christ;' 'in him fitly framed together, and growing up unto an holy temple in the Lord.' 'They were builded together for an habitation of God, through the spirit.' 'The Holy Ghost dwelt in them.' 'They were members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones;' and were so joined to the Lord as to be "one spirit." These persons repenting of their sins, believing with the heart, on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to whom he was "the end of the law for righteousness," united together with such as professed to be like them, to support the worship, observe the ordinances, and

obey the commands of God. In this united character they were the "church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." And such has been "the church of the living God," in every generation, down to the present day.

They are persons who, if they are what they profess to be, *are born of God, repent of all their sins, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have passed from death unto life.*

II. What is the truth which the church supports? What truth did it support in the days of Paul?

The truth which Paul preached, when he 'determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ, and him crucified;' and 'delivered unto them, *first of all*, that Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; and rose again for our justification, according to the scriptures;'—when he said, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world; for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.' 'And if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.' That the church supported this truth, is evident from the fact, that it is the truth of God, and they were converted by it. 'I neither received it of man,' said he, 'neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.' And 'I have begotten you through the gospel;'—'which ye have received, wherein ye stand; and by which ye are saved,—unless ye have believed in vain.'

This will not be denied. All will admit, that the church of the living God, when faithful to him, did, in the days of Paul, support the truth, which he preached. But the great question is, What is the truth which Paul preached? About this, there is a great difference of opinion; and there was, even in the days of Paul. Some said that he preached, what he said that he did *not* preach. Others said that he did not preach, what he said that he *did*. Yet Paul was one of the plainest preachers, as well as one of the best that ever lived. And had there been but one feeling about his preaching, and that of cordial approbation, there would have been but one opinion as to what it was. And it would have been to all, 'the wisdom and the power of God.'

But as there was a difference of *feeling* about his preaching, there was a great difference of opinion as to what it was. A similar difference of feeling, has made a similar difference of opinion ever since. After all the light which has been thrown upon it, by the dispensations of Providence, and the manifestations of grace for more than seventeen hundred years, there is now a great difference of opinion about the preaching of Paul. The Holy Ghost, seeing the end from the beginning, knew that this would be the case. He therefore directed Paul, in the next verse to the text, to tell, what the truth is which he did preach; and which the church of the living God does support. This he has done, in words which the Holy Ghost taught him. "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

This is the truth which Paul preached, and which the church of the living God supports; "God was manifest in the flesh." 'He who, in the beginning, was with God, and who *was* God, was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' 'He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham;' 'of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever;' 'the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace;'—'the Alpha and Omega; the beginning and ending; which is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty;'—'by whom all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth; visible, and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers;'—'all things were created by him, and for him;'—'and without him, was not any thing made that was made.' Yet 'though he was so rich, for *our* sakes he became poor, that *we*, through his poverty, might be rich.' Though he 'was God, for our sakes, he took upon him the form of a servant;—and was made in the likeness of men.' Let it be told to every being in creation; let it be echoed by every tongue in the universe; and felt by every heart to eternity, "*God was manifest in the flesh.*"

This is the truth which the "church of the living God" supports. By this is not meant however merely the single fact, that he became a man; but this fact taken in connexion with other facts as God has revealed them. Hence said Paul not only, "God was manifest in the flesh," but "justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles,

believed on in the world, received up into glory." 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,' and for the sake of accomplishing his work as a Saviour, 'became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' But death could not hold *him*. He was never its prisoner; but only a voluntary captive. And having accomplished his object in dying, he arose, with all power in heaven, and on earth. Then, he was 'justified in the spirit.' The truth of his declarations was demonstrated; and his claims as Messiah established forever. In this condition, as conqueror of earth and hell, he was 'seen of angels.' Multitudes beheld him. Chosen witnesses were sent to declare his resurrection, and preach the unsearchable riches of his grace, not to Jews only, but to Gentiles;—to all nations. And although they did not see him, and had no ocular demonstration of his resurrection, yet he was "believed on;" and by vast multitudes, even after he was "received up into glory." And although "not seen," he was "*loved*." To all that believed on him he was "precious;" the "chief among ten thousand;" "altogether lovely." And this has been the case with all who have believon him, down to the present day. They have been ready to cry, with Thomas, "my Lord, and my God;" with Paul, to "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus;" and with Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, to cry, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

These persons wherever found, have united together; that, not as individuals only, but churches, they might "serve the Lord Christ;" and thus support the truth, that "God was manifest in the flesh."

In view of this truth, thinking men have always been disposed to ask, *why* was he manifest in the flesh? The church has answered, in the language of the Holy Ghost, "That he might be a merciful, and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;" and, "such an high priest," say they, "became us." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray;—and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

The moment this is believed, another question arises, Why was he the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world? And the answer of the church is, "That God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth." 'He hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin, (a sin offering,) for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' And 'there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.' 'The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made them free from the law of sin and death.' "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." No sooner is this heard as the declaration of God, and believed, than the question arises, What will be

the condition of those that believe not? And the church answers in the language of God, 'They shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on them.' 'He shall send forth his angels, and gather out of his kingdom all that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' 'They shall go away into everlasting punishment;' 'and the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever.'

Such is the truth, which on the declaration of God, and in the connexion in which he has revealed it, the church of the living God supports.

III. How does the church support this truth?

1. By *believing* it. The church *believes*, that "God was manifest in the flesh;" and that 'although he knew no sin, he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;' that when he 'died for all, all were dead;' and that 'he died for all, that they who live should not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.'

The church *believes*, that all who repent, look unto him as the Lord their righteousness, and by patient continuance in *well doing*, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, shall obtain eternal life. And that all who are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, 'shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in them that believe.' And as the character of the

church is such as to give her belief influence, by believing this truth, she supports it in the world.

2. The church supports this truth by *openly professing* it. Ever since God was manifest in the flesh the church has openly professed this truth; before the Jew and the Greek, the Barbarian and the Scythian, the bond and the free. This confession has been published, and read by the learned, and unlearned. It has testified to men of all classes and generations, the 'great mystery of godliness;' and directed their minds with greater or less clearness, to those momentous truths which it involves, upon the practical belief of which depends the salvation of men.

This long chain of evidence, commencing with the testimony of God, and carried forward by the testimony of fifty generations of men; men too, of whom the world was not worthy, and who loved the truth more than life itself, has given it great influence in the world. And although this *good confession* has been assailed by the moralist, and the profligate; the infidel, and the scoffer; the Jew, and the pagan; and all the host, in every generation, 'who have denied the Lord that bought them;' yet the church has never renounced it. And while she has existence she never will; for she hears a voice saying, 'Hold fast that thou hast, and let no man take thy crown.'

3. The church supports this truth by the *preaching*, and *ordinances* of the gospel.

When the Saviour ascended on high, leading captivity captive, he gave gifts to men. To some he gave apostles; to some, prophets; to some,

evangelists; and to some, pastors and teachers. These were all for the increase and prosperity of the church; till her members should "all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The grand means of accomplishing this, was to be the preaching and ordinances of the gospel. Hence his ministers were commanded to go forth, and preach, not themselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord; not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the *truth*, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. This truth, which they were required to preach, is that of which the church is "the pillar, and the ground." And the church has always had ministers, who have preached it. And although it has been a stumbling block to some, and foolishness to others, it has been the 'wisdom, and the power of God to the salvation of *all* who have believed.' Nor has this number been small. Relying upon his promise, and determining to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified, his ministers not counting life dear to them, have gone forth, in the plenitude of their weakness, and his strength, conquering, and to conquer. Satan and his legions, driven out from strong holds, which they had fortified for ages, have surrendered their captives, and retired in dismay before this band of martyrs, as they waved in holy triumph the banners of the cross. Songs of deliverance have echoed from ten thousand hearts; and ten thousand times ten thousand

poured forth their choicest strains to God their deliverer.

And so, we learn from his promise, it *will* be. "Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Supported by his presence, and glorying in his truth, they will continue to preach it. And attended by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, men will continue to embrace it. And those who are born of his spirit, will continue to support it. They know his voice, and they follow him. A stranger will they not follow; they know not the voice of strangers. If an apostle, if an angel from heaven should come unto them, and bring not this doctrine, that "God was manifest in the flesh," they would not receive him; nor would they bid him God speed. Others might follow him, and believe his errors, but those who are born of God, by an "unction from the Holy One," would know them to be false. The same anointing teacheth them, that 'whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.' They will not receive any man as an ascension gift of their Redeemer, but one who appears to glory in his cross; and by it to be crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him. No where but on the cross, and in the face of him who bled upon it, 'bearing their sins in his own body on the tree,' can they see the 'light of the knowledge of the glory of God.' And losing sight of this, they are in total darkness. Their very light becomes darkness. Nothing can dispel it but a view of 'God manifest in the flesh,' who is the "light of the world." And those who follow him shall not walk in darkness, but have "the light of life."

The christian sabbath is an evidence that God was manifest in the flesh. It was set apart in remembrance of his resurrection, and by keeping it holy, the church supports this truth. The sabbath also gives men opportunity to attend to this truth, and to hear the evidence by which it is supported. And as faith cometh by hearing, when they hear, they not unfrequently believe. 'The truth comes, not in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.'

Every time the church surrounds the table of her Lord, she testifies to all, that he was manifest in the flesh. In proof of it she points to him, as evidently set forth crucified before them.

Every time the ordinance of baptism is administered, she acknowledges before the world, that divine wonder in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; with all those revealed and essential truths, which a belief in this great mystery involves.

4. The church supports this truth by teaching it to her children.

The wisdom that is from *beneath* says, Give to children no religious instruction; and exert upon them no moral influence in favour of the gospel, lest they receive an improper bias. When they come to years of understanding, let them alone to choose for themselves, and then they will choose right.

But the wisdom that is from *above* saith, "Train up a child in the way he should go." 'Teach these things diligently to thy children, when thou sittest in the house, and when thou walkest by the way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.' 'Suffer

little children to come unto me.' 'Train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' In these directions the church recognizes the voice of her God; and acknowledges her obligations to obey. She dedicates her children in infancy, to the "Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." When they come to years of understanding she instructs them; gives them line upon line, and precept upon precept. And that her instructions may not be lost, she unites in supplication to her covenant God, that he would 'pour his Spirit upon her seed, and his blessing upon her offspring;' 'that her sons may be as plants grown up in their youth, and her daughters as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace.' And she never finds that he has said to the "seed of Jacob," seek my face in vain. No; but 'they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear before me forever, for the good of them and their *children* after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.'

And *we* are not left merely to promises. We have their fulfilment.—In yonder distant country was a little feeble band, inspired with love to Christ, who covenanted to educate their children for him. Not able to do it according to his word, and the dictates of their consciences in their own land, they escape under the cover of night, with their little ones, to a foreign clime. But their children still exposed,

they embark upon the ocean, with no protector, but their covenant God. And though the very elements seem to join with earth and hell to oppose them, borne in his arms, I see them approaching, till they enter yonder haven, and stand upon a *rock*. And though winter, and famine, and pestilence attack them and cut down half their numbers, around them I see the arms of the everlasting covenant, within them the Shekinah, and hear a voice saying, "Leave your fatherless children, and let your widows trust in me." "I will never leave nor forsake thee;" and, "they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." They hearken, and lo they 'break forth on the right hand, and extend themselves on the left;' 'a little one becomes a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.' They spread from sea to sea, and 'he is a God to them, and their children after them, from generation to generation;' 'keeping covenant, and mercy to thousands of them that love him, and obey his commandments.'

5. The church of the living God supports this truth, by extending it to the destitute.

Ever since Jesus Christ gave the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," the church has acknowledged her obligations to obey. And she has prayed that she might fulfil them. For a time her efforts, in some measure, corresponded with her prayers. Her missionaries were found in various lands. Trophies of grace were multiplied; churches were gathered from among the heathen; and the gospel seemed ready to be extended through the world.

But the church, which was to be the instrument of this, elated by prosperity, became corrupt in doctrine. The consequence was, she became corrupt in practice. Her prayers grew formal, her efforts were palsied, and the progress of truth ceased. The darkness which she had rolled back, now began to return; the smoke, and the locusts from the bottomless pit overshadowed; the beast, and the false prophet came upon her; and she had to struggle even for existence, a thousand years. Some, however, among her children sighed over her abominations, and bewailed her calamities. With the souls under the altar they cried without ceasing, 'Lord, how long?' And he who had promised that the gates of hell should not prevail, heard. He arose,—light broke in,—and Zion 'looked forth as the morning, beautiful as Tirzah, and comely as Jerusalem.' But she again slumbered; and, for two hundred years, did little more than maintain the truth within her own borders. Yet all that time she acknowledged her obligations to extend it to every creature. She constantly prayed, that 'the heathen might be given to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.' But, shameful to relate, with the exception of her Elliots, her Brainerds, and a few kindred spirits, she did next to nothing, that her own prayers might be answered. The consequence was, the truth which she supported, and which is destined in its progress to enlighten and renovate the world, was confined within the limits of christendom. Five hundred millions of the human family, eighteen hundred years after "Christ

died to redeem them," had never heard of it. Fifty generations of immortal souls in danger of eternal death, were suffered to go down in unbroken succession to the grave, and never even to hear that "God was manifest in the flesh," till their probation was closed, and their accounts sealed up to the judgment.

O, had not her Saviour been God, long ere this, the church had been consumed! She had been swept away, and her name blotted out! But "glory to God in the highest," her maker is 'her husband, the LORD of Hosts is his name.' 'The Holy One is her Redeemer, the God of the whole earth shall he be called.'

By a convulsion which shook half the globe, he awoke her from her slumbers,—by the finger of his providence pointed her to her duty. By his spirit he impressed upon her heart that she must not only pray that the heathen may be converted, but give them the Bible, and the preaching of the gospel, that her prayers may be answered.

She arose not only to pray, but to *act;* and from that time she has 'lengthened her cords, and strengthened her stakes.' More than four hundred of her missionaries are now among the heathen; and more than two hundred churches has she gathered in pagan lands. More than fifty thousand children are now in her missionary schools; and more than fifty of her ministers, who, thirty years ago, were abominable idolaters, are now preaching 'the unsearchable riches of Christ. Ministers born in pagan lands, and ministers born in christian lands.

are now telling the wandering idolaters of a Saviour, "God manifest in the flesh." And the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven is leading them to embrace him. You may hear his praises in the western wilderness; in the islands of the southern sea; for a thousand miles on the continent of Africa; in Ceylon, and India; in Astrachan, and Greenland. Hearken, my brethren, and you hear the Cherokee and Chocktaw; the Hottentot and Hindoo; the Greenlander, and Otaheitan, all mingling their praises 'unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his father; to him be glory, and dominion, forever, and ever.'

And every real convert to Christ from among the heathen, is a new accession to the "pillar and ground of the truth." From the heart they embrace the 'great mystery of Godliness,' and unite their prayers and efforts to support it.

By sending the gospel to the destitute, the church also supports the truth in another way. She lets the light of holiness shine on those at home, and thus leads *them* to glorify her Father. While she waters others, God waters *her*. For every measure which she gives, she *receives*, 'good measure, pressed down, and running over.' The more she scatters, the more she *increases*.

As soon as she began to send the blessings of salvation beyond her own borders, God began to increase her numbers, multiply her resources, and augment her strength. And these have been steadily advancing, with every new effort which she has

made, until, without lessening their increase, she can stretch out her arms, with the blessing of life, half round the globe. And what she has done, is only the beginning of what she will do. 'For brass she will bring gold; for iron, silver; for wood, brass; and for stones, iron.' The bells of her horses shall be holiness; her very walls be salvation, and her gates praise. Then shall God, who was manifest in the flesh, be known, from the rising to the setting sun, and the whole earth be filled with his glory, as the waters fill the seas.

Hence we are prepared to see

IV. The reasons why the church supports this truth. It is the truth of God. By an unction from him, she knows it. Upon it she builds her immortal hopes, and it is the only foundation of hope for a dying world. In its support, are involved the glory of God, and the salvation of men. His manifestation in the flesh was the grand effort of infinite grace, for bringing out to view the glories of the Godhead. It was made in behalf of the *church*. And should she refuse to support it, the very stones would cry out against her. To it she owes all her hopes of deliverance from hell, and of exaltation to the light, and bliss, of heaven.

Reject universally the great mystery of godliness, and godliness will take its last flight from the world. No shaking after that will ever be witnessed throughout all this valley of dry bones—no voice cry O breath, breathe upon these slain; and no heart desire it.

But let the great mystery of godliness be sup-

ported, let it be extended, accompanied by the Holy Ghost, and cordially embraced, tears of repentance, in view of the crucified, will drop from a thousand eyes, and ten thousand hearts will bow in contrition before the cross. The love of Him who bled upon it, shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost will constrain them, and will purify them, even as God is pure. From this will arise a hope which will not make ashamed, but which will be an anchor sure and stedfast. It will support them even in death. Thousands have tried it, and not one has found it to fail them. As they go down the dark valley, I hear them sing, 'O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory?' and shout, 'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'We shall see him as he is, and be *like* him.' Ah, that last, "be like *him*," swallows up death—and they mount upward, shining in the glory of his image, and break forth with ten thousand voices, 'Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue;' while angels ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, cry 'Worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessings.' And every creature in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, hear I saying, "Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." And their song never wears out,—never grows dull,—no heart is languid,—not a voice falters,—not a tongue tires;—but with increasing

ardour, and increasing powers, and evergrowing views of God manifest in the flesh, their accents of glory rise higher and higher,—and to every heart grow sweeter and sweeter,—to endless ages.

Application.

1. If the church is composed of persons, who, according to profession, are "born of God," and is "the pillar and ground of the truth," then a body of persons who do not *profess* to be born of God, who disbelieve the truth, and who *understandingly* and openly oppose it, are not, according to the characteristick given in the text, a church of Christ. They may be a body politick, bound together by human laws, but they are not according to the characteristick in the text, a church of the living God. If they understandingly, and openly reject the truth, they do not support it. And if they do not support it, they are not its "pillar and ground." And if they are not "the pillar and ground of the truth," they are not, according to the characteristick in the text, a church.

2. No person can, according to our text, become a member of the church without professing the truth, and appearing cordially to embrace it. For if one person may be admitted without this, another may, and another; all may. The church will then lose its distinctive character, as given by the Holy Ghost. It will not be "the pillar, and ground of the truth." Nor will it be a 'chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people to show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of dark-

ness into his marvellous light.' Nor will they be 'as lively stones, built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' Nor will they be 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' Nor will they be 'begotten again unto a lively hope.' Nor will they be 'kept by the power of God through *faith* unto salvation.' In short, they will not have one peculiar distinctive feature of a church of the living God, as delineated by the Holy Spirit; but will be "conformed to the world."

3. Evidence of being born of God, and of cordially embracing the truth, is an essential qualification in a minister of the gospel. And without this, no "church of the living God" can, consistently with faithfulness to him, receive any man as *her* minister. Let his other qualifications be what they may, if he does not appear to be "born of God," and cordially to embrace the *truth*, the church cannot consistently with faithfulness to her Saviour, herself, and her children ever receive him. What I said before I say now again, If an apostle, if an angel from heaven come unto her, and preach any other gospel than that which Paul preached, she ought to reject him. And no man, or body of men on earth, has, or *can* have the least right to force upon the church such a minister. If any make the attempt the church ought to resist it; meekly, in the very spirit of her Master; prayerfully, boldly, *perseveringly*. To her is committed the momentous trust, of *contending earnestly*

for "the faith once delivered to the saints." She was redeemed by the blood of Christ, and organized as a visible body on earth, for the purpose of maintaining that truth, which he came down from heaven, and died to illustrate; in which is involved the glory of God, and the salvation of a world;—that truth which is 'in ages to come, to show angels, and principalities, and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God.' And one of the principal means of supporting this truth is the preaching of her ministers. But if they do not believe the truth, how can they preach it? And if they do not preach it, instead of supporting, they tend only to undermine, and destroy it. They had better not preach at all, than not to preach the *truth*. Error in the pulpit, is poison in the fountain. It carries death through all the streams.

4. Whatever difficulties the church may meet with in supporting the truth, she ought never to renounce it.

That she will meet with trials in supporting it, no one can doubt. She must support it against every thing unholy in herself, and every thing unholy in others. And she must support it in a world which is so hostile to the author of it, that although the sum of infinite perfection, and on the errand of eternal kindness, they would not suffer him to *live* in it. He opened to them a heart "full of grace and truth," but they hated him "without a cause;" and cried out, 'Away with him, away with him; Crucify him, crucify him.' Yet the church must support his truth; and in this very world too where he was slain; and

where, 'as in water face answereth to face, so does the heart of man to man.' Her work is *difficult.* She needs the constant presence of God. Without it her case is hopeless. Often will she be on fire, and if her God is not in her will be consumed. But her God *is* in her. 'Fear not, saith he, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.' 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.' 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'

Surely then, she ought never to renounce his truth. If she should, she would renounce the very object of her existence; would give up the glory of God, and the salvation of a world. She would abandon her own children, and children's children to the interminable effects of transgression; put out the only light that ever shone upon her darkness, and commence a march of eternal wandering away from God, and the glory of his power.

Suppose she *must*, to be faithful to God, and support his truth, give up *half* her property; suppose she must give up *all;* and in addition, must suffer cruel mockings, or even scourgings, and bonds, and imprisonments; suppose she must be not only tempted, but sawn asunder, or slain with the edge of the sword; or must wander about in sheep skins,

and goat skins, destitute, afflicted, and *tormented;* what is that, compared to being with Christ when the heavens are on fire, and the elements are melting down? What are sacrifices, and trials, compared to going upward, with a multitude which no man can number, to take possession of a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world? *Nothing.* Were they a thousand fold greater, and a thousand times longer continued, they would not be "worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed."

There is no man that hath sacrificed houses or lands, gold or silver, or any thing *for Christ*, who shall not receive an hundred fold in this present world, and in the world to come life everlasting.

5. The situation of a minister is one of amazing responsibility.

He is a captain of the Lord's host, who, under the Captain of salvation, is to lead them onward, through all their spiritual conflicts, to final victory. And their conduct, in the day of trial, will depend much upon his. If, when called to face 'flesh and blood, principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places,' he turns out to be a traitor or a coward, or even unskilful in wielding the sword of the spirit, it may cost a multitude of souls.

If he does not know the truth, does not believe it, or has not experienced the exceeding greatness of its mighty power,—if he does not think it worth contending for, does not know when enemies attack it, or has not the power, and disposition, with weap-

ons which are not carnal, but mighty through God, to repulse them, he had better be any thing than a minister. He had better labour at any honest calling, to obtain his bread, than to be set up for the defence of the gospel, if he does not know the gospel, does not love the gospel, and is not willing when God calls, to sacrifice *all* to support it. The gospel is a 'savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.' All who hear it must be raised to an exceeding, and eternal weight of glory; or sink down deeper and deeper amidst the wailings of the bottomless pit forever.

My dear brother,

You are entering upon a great work, at an important time, and in a most interesting place. Upon the spot which first received the Pilgrims, which heard their prayers, saw their tears, and now encloses their dust; and among those very descendants, for whose salvation they sacrificed, toiled, suffered, and bled, you are to be placed for the defence of the gospel. The gospel which you are to preach is that which was preached by Paul; which was supported by the church at Ephesus; and of which, 'the church of the living God, has been the pillar, and the ground,' in every generation. It was embraced by the Puritans of England; and was by them planted on these shores. It has laid the foundation of all our social, civil, and religious institutions; and is now pouring a flood of blessings, greater than was ever before enjoyed, upon the millions of our land. And profitable as it has been, and is

now for this life, all these blessings are only a faint emblem of those spiritual blessings, which it opens upon the penitent, and believing; and of which it gives them eternal possession, in the life to come.

The first settlers of Plymouth, the fathers of New England, and the lights of this western world, died in the faith of *this* gospel; and left it in solemn charge to their posterity, whatever it might cost them, to maintain it, to the end of the world. And we give glory to God, that descendants of the Pilgrims on the spot where they sleep, embrace this gospel; and unite with millions, and millions, of their descendants in other parts of our land to support it. It is "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." You profess to love this gospel; and to have found it to be the wisdom, and the power of God. If you have, you will preach it. But in doing this, and in manifesting at all times its spirit, you will need the whole armour of God. You must pass through not only good report, but evil report. Although the church of which you are to be Pastor loves the truth, and will, we trust, be its "pillar, and ground," yet like every church militant, it is in a world which lieth in wickedness; and where the "offence of the cross" has *never* ceased. And to glory only in this cross; and perseveringly 'to know nothing among your people, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' you must, as one of the elect of God, put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. And to faith you must add virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience;

to patience, godliness; to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, *love.*

These things must be in you, and abound. In every conflict put on the 'breastplate of righteousness, take the shield of faith, for an helmet the hope of salvation, and draw the sword of the spirit;' stand, and use it naked, in all its brightness, looking upward to Him who was never conquered, and your conflict will soon be over; and you will leave the field triumphantly exclaiming, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

May this blessedness, my brother, be *yours;* and after turning *many* to righteousness, may you meet them in heaven, and give the glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost forever, AMEN.

CHARGE

BY REV. OLIVER COBB,

OF ROCHESTER.

No man can be placed in a more interesting, solemn and highly responsible situation, than the Gospel Minister. He is the ambassador of Jesus to negotiate business of infinite importance, between God and men. And no connexion, in its own nature temporal, involves such momentous consequences, as the connexion between a branch of Christ's Church and its Pastor—consequences, which are not bounded by time, but run parallel with eternity. The light of truth and a holy example should beam forth from the Church on the darkness around, that others seeing it may glorify God; and to elicit this light should be the unwearied study, labour and prayer of the Pastor.

With solemn joy, we have witnessed the consecration of our brother to the pastoral office in this Church, and to the work of the gospel ministry in this place. The ecclesiastical council, convened on this occasion, would remind the Pastor of the weight of obligation, which devolves on him, and according to apostolic example, charge him to be faithful.—By appointment of the council, I am constituted an organ to address this charge.

Dear Sir,

We presume, that you have not devoted yourself to the ministry —that you have not taken the oversight of this flock of Christ, without some good measure of premeditation and prayer.—Still, the dignity of your office—the magnitude of your work—the interesting consequences of your highly responsible station cannot be too deeply impressed on your mind. You are to watch for souls, as one, who must give an account.

We, therefore, "Charge you, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom," that you take heed to *yourself.* Keep your heart with all diligence; and let your life be, as becometh the Gospel. This is important, as relates to *yourself*—lest after having preached to others, you yourself should be a castaway. It is of the last importance, as respects the people of your charge. If you would recommend to *them* the gospel, which you preach, you must be a living witness of its holy tendency. Let them, therefore, and all, with whom you are conversant, take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus.

We also charge you, to take heed to your *doctrine.* As, it is incumbent on you to keep yourself in the love of God, and, in all things, to be an example of good works; so, it is incumbent, "In doctrine to manifest uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, which cannot be condemned: That he, who is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." Gospel truth has, in every age, been the grand means of converting sinners, and of comforting and sanctifying the people of God. Hence, the Saviour prayed, "Father, sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." We charge you, therefore, to make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the word of God. "Give attendance to reading; to doctrine; meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them that thy profiting may appear to all." The Bible is your chart—and the revelation is plain. No minister of Christ can have any excuse for ignorance of the essential truths of the christian religion—no one can have any excuse for withholding these truths from his hearers—and the curse of God is denounced on any one, even if he were an angel from heaven, who dares to preach another gospel.

We enjoin it on you, Dear Sir, by a regard for the glory of God—the salvation of your soul—and the souls of those, who hear you, to preach the unadulterated doctrines of the cross. Proclaim the character of God—the holiness of his law—the sinful and ruined state of man—the glory of Immanuel—the riches of grace—endless blessedness to the followers of the Lamb—and endless wo to those, who will not have him to reign over them.

You are placed, Dear Sir, in a peculiarly interesting part of our Lord's vineyard. We cannot contemplate this ancient Town, with-

out very many solemn and endearing recollections. *Here*, our venerable and pious ancestors worshipped the Lamb of God. *Here*, the standard of the cross was unfurled. From this spot, the word of the Lord went forth into the wilderness, which has now become a fruitful field, and is vocal with the praises of Immanuel. What the *faith* of the pilgrims was, is well known—it was manifestly, that faith, which was once delivered unto the saints. For this, we charge you to contend earnestly. Be a genuine son of the pilgrims. Let others (who would erase every vestige of their religion) *garnish their sepulchres;* but, Dear Sir, we exhort you to imbibe their spirit —their love of truth and zeal to promote it.

It will be your duty to administer the ordinances of the New Testament to proper subjects. If called to assist at ordinations, take time to become acquainted with the qualifications of candidates. "Lay hands suddenly on no man." What you have received commit to faithful men, and to such only.

You will, probably, be often called to the chambers of the sick and dying, and to houses of mourning. In seasons of affliction, you will administer such instruction, warning, encouragement, or consolation, as the variety of circumstances may require; and accompany them with prayer.

We charge you, to insist on the maintenance of regular discipline in the Church, according to the rule of Christ.

In your social interviews with the people of your charge, convince them that you are a servant of HIM, whose kingdom is not of this world. On all occasions *feel*, and *manifest* that you feel a deep solicitude for their eternal good.—With mildness and tenderness, but, at the same time, with firmness and decision, bear testimony against immorality and vice. "Reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." "Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood;" and pray impenitent sinners to be reconciled unto God. Incur not the guilt, we charge you, of those priests of old, who put no difference between the holy and profane—the unclean and the clean. Exert yourself, Dear Sir, to bring men into the Kingdom of Christ—but, stand firm against every attempt to immerse this kingdom into the world.

We know that the work, in which you have engaged, is a great work. But, the grace of Christ is sufficient for you. We exhort you to be mindful of your dependance on the chief Shepherd, and

to continue instant in prayer. To God and the word of his grace we commend you. May He, who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and holdeth the stars in his right hand, support and comfort you—make you a blessing to this Church and people—and finally give you a crown of life. AMEN.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP

BY REV. DAVID L. HUNN,

OF SANDWICH.

Rev. and dear Sir,

Agreeably, we trust, to the good pleasure of Him who sitteth King in Zion, you have now, in accordance with apostolic example, been renewedly set apart to the sacred work of the ministry; and solemnly installed, as pastor and teacher, over the church and people who usually assemble in this house of prayer.

You have also received the customary charge, faithfully to perform the duties, both personal and relative, connected with the office you sustain. An important *part* of the service, however, usual on occasions like the present, yet remains to be performed; I mean that of expressing the *fellowship*, subsisting between the churches here represented in council, and the church, the oversight of which you have just received.

Professing to be established in the belief of the same precious truths, which constituted the basis of the *first* church ever reared in this western world; and disposed tenderly to sympathise with those, who, standing on the same soil, have long struggled amid opposing obstacles, to maintain and preserve, entire, the faith of their *Fathers*, the faith once delivered to the saints;—our churches feel a peculiar pleasure, in being permitted, on this interesting occasion, to express their cordial fellowship for this *long continued* feeble and depressed sister church.—This fellowship, through their representatives, they wish, significantly, to express by tendering to *you*, Sir, the now constituted under shepherd of *this* church, the customary token of christian and ministerial affection.

Permit, me then, in the name of my Fathers and Brethren, the representatives of the churches here convened, to offer you *my right hand;* and to assure you, in doing it, that it is offered—not as an expression of worldly friendship, not as a token of natural affection, not as a mark of common civility—but as an *unequivocal* expression, as a *visible* token, as a *distinctive* mark of *that* fellowship, and of *that* affection, which subsist between all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and who cordially unite in embracing and defending the *cardinal principles* of the gospel of the grace of God.

This expression of fellowship, we are not insensible, confines the exercise of it, within, comparatively, narrow limits. At least, it gives no sanction to the exercise of that *spurious* catholicism, which inclines those who act under its influence, to receive to their embrace, without discrimination, *all* who assume the badge of Christianity.

To the honour of being catholic in *this* sense, and to *this* extent; to the honour of giving the hand of Christian fellowship to those who *reject* or *fritter away*, all that is peculiar to the gospel as a scheme of divine grace, we make no pretensions.

But wherever distinctive evidence is afforded, that the peculiarities of the Gospel are *understandingly received*, and their *practical* influence, DULY *felt*, *there*, we find occasion for the *consistent* exercise of christian fellowship. Those who exhibit such evidence, we joyfully hail as Christian Brethren.

After making this explicit disclosure of the views we entertain on the subject of Christian fellowship, and of the considerations by which we are influenced in giving the right hand, on occasions like the present, you will hardly *misunderstand* the import of this solemn service.

Allow me, however, to say—that by this *simple*, but significant act, we now recognize you as a Minister of Christ, as the regularly constituted pastor of this church—and as having with us, an equal right to all the privileges of the Pastoral office.

By this act, we bid you a cordial welcome to this interesting portion of the Lord's heritage; and as you have manifested a willingness to take part with us in the labours and afflictions of the Gospel, we beg leave to assure you, that whenever your circumstances

or the interests of your church shall require it, our council and assistance shall not be withheld.

By this act, we moreover, *virtually* promise, not only to maintain ministerial intercourse with you, but Christian fellowship also with the *church* whose oversight, in trust, you have this day received. This promise, however, is founded on the assumption, that both you and your church continue, unwaveringly, to adhere to the faith and practice of the gospel, to preserve, uninterruptedly, among yourselves, the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and cordially to reciprocate the same kind offices to us. And now, dear Sir, we commend, both you and the people of your charge, to God and to the word of his grace—beseeching Him to build you all up in the faith and hope of the Gospel, and to fit you all for an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

While we unfeignedly rejoice, in being permitted to witness the solemn and interesting transactions of this day, we can hardly withhold an expression of our hopes, that they may be, in their consequences, as *happy* as they are interesting, and as *lasting* as they are solemn. May they lay a permanent foundation for the future comfort and improvement of both *yourself* and your people, and prove a source of *mutual* congratulation so long as the connexion now formed, shall be continued; and when dissolved, may *you* and *they* be prepared for a more perfect and indissoluble union in that better world, where the redeemed of the Lord, in an uninterrupted strain, shall offer their united ascriptions of praise and thanksgiving to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever. Amen.

CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE

BY REV. SAMUEL GREEN,

OF BOSTON.

The church and people of this parish will suffer me as the humble organ of this council to present a few considerations to them, on this important occasion.

You have this day seen the man of your unanimous choice, by prayer solemnly inducted into the office of the Gospel ministry among you. It is a day big with interest. You have seen this young servant of Christ pressed down with the weight of his solemn charge. You have heard his duties to you faithfully delineated, and the almost overwhelming motives to a serious and diligent discharge of duties urged upon him. And I doubt not but many of you, while considering the amazing responsibilities your minister is this day taking upon him, have already made the reflection, We his people must sustain a share in these responsibilities. Is our minister to go all the way through his toilsome service with the judgment day ringing in his ears; is he to be loaded with a weight of obligations sufficient to crush an angel unless specially supported, to be faithful in the discharge of his duties to *us*, and are there no corresponding duties for us his people to perform? Is their no weight of reciprocal obligation resting upon us?

Yes, beloved hearers, you have every one of you, the child as well as the parent, a duty to discharge to your minister; and scarce can one of all those, which are now enjoined on him, be specified, but it would imply some corresponding duty on your part. Is he to preach? You are to hear. Is he to warn? You are to receive his warnings with a proper spirit. And just in proportion as the duties your minister owes you are solemn, and big with importance, so are those which you owe him? and the motives which urge them

on both sides are lasting as the soul, and binding as the authority of heaven.

I feel the greater freedom in speaking to you of the duties you owe your minister, in consequence of the uncommon unanimity which has pervaded all your movements relative to the call you have given him, and the pleasing share of your confidence and affection which I have reason to believe he already possesses. This whole matter appears to have been a manifest disposition of events by the great Head of the Church, and calls loudly for your gratitude.

It is not a matter of small consequence that a people be united in affectionate attachment to their minister. It constitutes a firm bond of union among themselves. It opens a wide door of usefulness to him. It sweetens all his labors and lightens all his burdens, and the solemn duties on both sides are likely to be much more readily and faithfully performed.

1. It is your duty to pray for your minister.

Intercede fervently with God that he may daily "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." His own soul must be replenished from the fountain of grace, or how can he feed your souls? He may entertain you with some moral harangue, but he cannot furnish you with that knowledge and understanding which will save your own souls, and those of your dear offspring, unless he be a holy and devout man himself. "Grace is light;" pray then that he may possess grace so as to enable him rightly to understand and divide the word of God. He is but a man, and should God withhold from him daily supplies of grace, he may be left to fall into some dangerous error which would destroy his own soul, and many of yours who hear him. Pray then that whenever he studies God's holy word a flood of light may beam from heaven upon the sacred page. Apostacy from sound doctrine, both in minister and the people, has its origin in the heart. Let the heart become proud and worldly and indisposed to prayer, and the clearest understanding may shortly find itself bewildered in the mazes of fatal error.

Especially pray for him on the sabbath. Every holy morning when you see him ascending these sacred steps, let your hearts ascend to God—O Lord, let thy servant come to us this day in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. A minister's failure

may be oftener owing to a deficiency in his people's prayers than is generally imagined. How often does Paul beg the churches to pray for him ?

2. Bear with his *plainness* and *fidelity*, and bless God when he is enabled to be faithful.

It requires no small degree of grace in a young man to be at all times a faithful reprover. If he consults his present worldly comfort he has a host of powerful inducements to be unfaithful. It is vastly more pleasant for a man of kind feelings, to tell his neighbor of his good deeds, than to wring his heart with a faithful reproof for his sins.

Can you wish your minister to conceal any part of the truth because it is unwelcome to the carnal heart? What will avail all your lullaby songs to a guilty conscience when the light of eternity shall burst upon the world! Inestimable is the gift of uncompromising faithfulness in a minister. O, give me the man who shall describe my guilt and danger even greater than they are, rather than one who shall smooth over the matter, and cry peace and safety when it is not so. And would it not be ungenerous for you, when he comes here pressed down with a sense of his responsibility, and brings truths which he knows will be unpleasant to some of you, but which he dares not keep back upon the peril of his own soul, and the hazard of yours, would it not be ungenerous for you to be offended? O you must be willing he should probe that deceitful heart to the bottom, throw light in through all its dark windings, and show you your character and your danger as measured by the infinite purity of God's law.

3. Attend constantly on his preaching with all your house. This is a duty you most clearly owe your minister as well as your God. The same command which bids ministers preach, must include a command to the people to hear, or to whom could they preach? Let not a little rain or snow, a slight indisposition, or any trifling obstacle keep you at home. Feel that it is a serious thing to withdraw yourself from the sanctuary even for one sabbath. It is business with the King of heaven you come hither to transact; it demands punctuality and constancy. It is a cheerless task for a minister to preach to sleepy or inattentive hearers; but it is yet worse to preach to the empty walls. I beseech you, remember, every vacant pew will seem to him to possess a tongue telling him the sad

tale that its careless owner is so indifferent to his preaching and to all the privileges of the sanctuary, that he had rather spend the sacred hours in idleness or worldly occupations than come up to God's house. And enjoin the same punctual attendance on all your family: what said Joshua? "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." And this should be the only condition on which any one can be a member of your family, that he regularly wait on God in his house. When you enter this sanctuary of the most high God, feel as if you stood on holy ground. Attend to the preaching of the word, and all its ordinances, as though you realized that the canopy of heaven was drawn aside, and holy angels and redeemed spirits were gazing intently upon you to see how you worship their God.

4. When he visits you from house to house, expect him to converse on the subject of religion—not as a mere speculative, formal topic,—but on those points which infinitely concern *you personally*. If religion be of consequence to any person, you must know it is to you as an individual. Do not wave the subject, nor attempt to evade it by introducing a thousand worldly topics. Your minister, if he is faithful to his high trust, as we devoutly hope he will be, must live among you as a man of God. He is not to appear in the garb of sanctity on the Sabbath only, and the rest of the week be merely the good natured, sociable neighbor; but he must be the minister of the Lord Jesus Christ every day, and in all situations. Paul reminds the elders of Ephesus that he had not only preached the gospel to them on the Sabbath, but from house to house had he gone testifying—what? Concerning husbandry, politics, or philosophy? No; "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." Your secular concerns necessarily call for worldly conversation enough among yourselves; when he comes into your families, or social circle, it must be to call your thoughts away from earth, and elevate your affections to things heavenly and divine; to banish the vanities of time and sense, and fill your souls with the thoughts of God and eternity.

Afford him too every possible facility of conversing with your children and family; he is their minister as well as yours. For this purpose let them all be assembled at his pastoral visits; and with a feeling that his time is exceedingly precious, and his conversation important, do not delay introducing your children till the time he can spend in your family has expired, and he about to depart.

There is another thing which I would observe ; (I know you will bear with my honest plainness ;) and it is of no small consequence in rendering his visits profitable to you. When he enters your family, do not discompose his mind nor occupy his time in finding fault that he does not come oftener, nor in pressing him out of measure to come again soon : that which will bring him the soonest to your dwelling, if he possess the spirit of his office, is evidence that his visits are doing you good.

There is yet another thing ;—do not expect long visits from your minister. Remember he is not endowed with the attribute of *omnipresence*. I would say, the good Lord deliver our churches from those ministers who can in their ordinary way spend two or three hours in one family in mere social chit chat. Such a man has forgotten his high and holy calling; is ruining his *moral* as well as *intellectual* powers ; is starving his own soul, and the souls of his people. It is no evidence of his *love* to *you*, but of his dislike of study, and the more laborious duties of his profession. Under ordinary circumstances, I will venture to affirm that from half an hour to an hour will constitute the length of his most profitable visits. I am confident he cannot exceed this limit and do among you the greatest amount of good, taking into view the improvement of his own mind and heart, and his preparation for public services. Because you do not see him among you every day, do not conclude he is idle, or doing nothing for your good ; he must be a man of prayer, of reflection, of study, or he will soon cease to be useful to you ; and in order for this he must have his seasons of uninterrupted retirement.

5. Encourage him by your ready cooperation in every good work. Beware that you do not dishearten him, and impede his usefulness by a backwardness to assist in promoting any judicious plan of doing good to yourselves or your children. When he appoints prayer meetings for the church, and preparatory lectures, do not damp his zeal and paralize his efforts by being absent: his eye at such seasons will readily catch your vacant seat, and he will have many anxious thoughts lest all be not well with your soul. In the systems he shall adopt to give religious instruction to the dear children and youth, encourage him to the utmost; send your children to all his appointments for catechising them. Oh there is sometimes an awful indifference in parents on this subject, enough almost to break the heart of a feeling minister. And let not the youth be

backward themselves on this subject. Do not say, my young friends, that, though you have passed the years of childhood, you are too old to receive instruction in this way from your minister—you are never too old to study the great truths of the Bible.

Nor be indifferent when he shall have occasion to spread before you the wants of feeble sister churches. And when you shall hear the cry of pagans perishing by thousands for the bread of life, O, think of him who though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, and let not your ears be deaf, nor your hearts cold.

6. Spread the mantle of love over his failings.

If he by his preaching and daily deportment gives you reason to believe that he is a man of God, and devoted to your best interests, as we trust he will, make allowance for human infirmity. If he says any thing in the desk, or out of it, with which you have serious difficulties, go directly to him alone the first opportunity, and lay open your difficulties generously and freely. If you think he neglects you, or is guilty of any indiscretion, do not be angry with him, and let it lie rankling in your bosom, or by spreading it over the neighbourhood, disaffect the minds of others; this is not the way to promote your own improvement, nor his happiness. Do not by him as God complains of the people doing by Ezekiel, "Thy people," he says, "are talking against thee in the doors, and by the walls of the houses."

An ungenerous sneer, or a hard observation, uttered by a man of respectability, against your minister in the hearing of the young, and the credulous, might destroy in their minds the effect of many a sermon. Destroy a minister's respectability, and you destroy his usefulness; you rob Christ of a servant, and his vineyard of a laborer.

I shall not say a word about your duty in providing for his temporal necessities, because I do not believe, if he is a faithful, laborious servant of Christ among you, your generosity will ever suffer him to want worldly comforts, or be embarrassed with worldly cares.

I therefore observe, in the last place, in all your intercourse with him, keep *the judgment day in view.*

"They watch for your souls," says Paul, "as they that must give account," &c.—And again he reminds his converts, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."

He who to day bestows on you this ascension gift, says, "Behold

I come quickly." And how shall they, who disregard the calls of heavenly mercy, and all the labors of his faithful servants, stand when He appeareth? From that solemn review, though some of you may quake with fear, and call on the mountains to hide you, there will be no discharge. For every sermon, and every faithful warning you receive from the lips of your minister, whether you improve or abuse it, you must give account at the day of judgment. Let this thought never be forgotten. O how solemn the scene, when the Lord of the harvest shall come with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and this young servant of Christ, and this dear people, parents and children, now entrusted to his care, shall appear face to face before God's bar! Do the transactions of this day spread even now a solemnity over all our minds? well they may:—but the hour is at hand when we shall view the amazing consequences in a light of which we now form but faint conceptions. Then, and not till then, shall we learn the overwhelming import of the apostle; "for we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life; and who is sufficient for these things?" O my beloved hearers, should any of you misimprove the privileges with which this day blesses you, and appear before the judgment seat among those who have despised the gospel of God's dear Son, better, infinitely better will you feel it would be for you never to have been born. But instead of such a woful meeting; instead of your minister being compelled to bear in his testimony against you, may he, on that great day of Christ's appearing, present you all as his joy and crown of rejoicing.